EN 9

Poetry

Metaphors and Similes

Two of the most common devices in poetry are metaphors and similes. They both COMPARE one noun to another, but they are different. Similes use the words “like” or “as” in their comparison. They feel a bit more wishy-washy than metaphors, which compare two things without using the words “like” or “as”. Metaphors make clearer images in readers’ minds.

Examples of similes: She is as pretty as a picture. Your smile is like the sun.

Examples of metaphors: Peter is a rat! Life is a highway. I have an ocean of troubles.

Identify each of the following as either a simile or a metaphor.

1. Life’s but a walking shadow (Shakespeare, *Macbeth*)
2. Death lies upon her like an untimely frost. (Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*)
3. James was as cool as a cucumber.
4. It’s been a hard day’s night/And I’ve been working like a dog (Lennon and McCartney, “Hard Day’s Night”)
5. Every day is a winding road (Sheryl Crow, “Every Day Is a Winding Road”)

One type of poem is the “extended metaphor” poem. In this kind of poetry, the poet uses one metaphor to compare two things, but gives many examples of how the two things are alike. Here is a sample extended metaphor poem:

***The Cafeteria***  
by Alex Foster, Maura Grasshoff, Bridget Bradley, and Christa Michel (grade 9 students)  
The cafeteria is a jungle.  
Wild animals scrambling for food,  
Grunting   
like wild boars  
Stampeding   
to the line  
Devouring   
their prey  
Cleaning   
their paws  
and then returning to their dens.

Here is a famous extended metaphor poem:

Hope is the Thing with Feathers

By Emily Dickinson

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| HOPE is the thing with feathers |  |
| That perches in the soul, |  |
| And sings the tune without the words, |  |
| And never stops at all, |  |
|  |  |
| And sweetest in the gale is heard; | *5* |
| And sore must be the storm |  |
| That could abash the little bird |  |
| That kept so many warm. |  |
|  |  |
| I’ve heard it in the chillest land, |  |
| And on the strangest sea; | *10* |
| Yet, never, in extremity, |  |
| It asked a crumb of me. |  |
|  |  |

Assignment: Write your own extended metaphor poem.

Directions: Start by choosing a topic from the list below. Think of something else you could compare it to. Then make a chart showing as many ways that the two things are similar as you can. Finally, write a poem that clearly shows how your two nouns are related.

Choose from the topics here:

School Homework My brother Nature Love

Fear Anger Dancing Running Reading

Paper My sister Tacos Laughter My room

Dogs A tree Dragons A pen Movies

Hand in your extended metaphor poem.

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Poetry

Two-Tone Poetry

What colour are you? That’s not a silly (or racist!) question! According to psychologists, certain colours trigger certain feelings or moods in many people. Some colours are “warm” and others are “cool”. Some colours attract attention; others blend in with their surroundings. Our own interpretation of (or feelings about) colours, along with our self-knowledge, can be a good combination to start a “two-tone” poem.

Examples:

1. Part of me is a brilliant yellow—

lively and vivacious

bouncy and buoyant,

teasing my friends and enjoying the spotlight.

But deep inside, there’s another part,

pale purple, like a violet hiding under a leaf—

shy and self-conscious,

fearful and cowardly,

shaking with stage fright when the telephone rings.

Yet they’re both very real,

and they’re both *me!*

1. Some days I’m firecracker red—

full of energy and smart remarks,

like a wild bull, ready to attack the world!

Other days, I’m a faded grey—

rumpled and crumpled and careless and useless,

soggy and sleepy and all worn-out.

But watch out, folks,

‘cause today I’m red!

Study the two poems above. Which one describes two sides of a person’s personality or character? Which one talks about how a person’s mood can change from day to day? Do they both end with a closing statement? Can you suggest a title for each?

Assignment: Write your own two-tone poem. Use strong adjectives and choose your two colours wisely. Try to make up an original name for your colour—elephant grey, pickle green, etc. You might even want to use stripes, polka dots or plaids.

When you have written your rough copy of your two-tone poem, be sure to proofread it carefully! Then copy it neatly onto a piece of white paper (from Mrs. Cousar’s second drawer) and decorate the page with your two colours.

Hand in your completed mini-poster. Be sure it includes your name and period. (on the back if you like—these will be posted in the hall).

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Poetry

Imagery in Poetry

Imagery is writing with enough details to arouse the senses of touch, taste, sight, smell and/or sound for the reader.

Consider this extract from “The Burning of the Leaves” by Laurence Binyon:

Now is the time for the burning of the leaves.

They go to the fire; the nostril pricks with smoke

Wandering slowly into a weeping mist.

Brittle and blotched, ragged and rotten sheaves!

A flame seizes the smouldering ruin and bites

On stubborn stalks that crackle as they resist.

The last hollyhock’s fallen tower is dust;

All the spices of June are a bitter reek.

All the extravagant riches spent and mean.

All burns! The reddest rose is a ghost;

Sparks whirl up, to expire in the mist; the wild

Fingers of fire are making corruption clean.

Now is the time for stripping the spirit bare,

Time for the burning of days ended and done.

Idle solace of things that have gone before:

Rootless hopes and fruitless desire are there;

Let them go to the fire, with never a look behind.

The world that was ours is a world that is ours no more.

They will come again, the leaf and the flower, to arise

From squalor of rottenness into the old splendour,

And magical scents to a wondering memory bring;

The same glory, to shine upon different eyes.

Earth cares for her own ruins, naught for ours.

Nothing is certain, only the certain spring.

Your turn. Follow the steps below to write an imagery poem of your own describing a place of your choice. Here is an example:

Island in a Storm

Moss-covered rocks climb

The disappearing blue

Water pounds like thunder

And wind scrapes like fingernails

As I shiver against the monster storm

Step 1: Brainstorm five places you could write about:

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: Choose one place: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Step 3: Complete these sentences describing the place.

I see \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I hear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I feel or touch \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I smell \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I taste \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Step 4: Combine at least three images into your imagery poem. It must be at least five lines long. Don’t just list the sentences as they appear in step 3!

Step 5: Hand it in.

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I Am Poems

The “I am” poem is a rigid kind of poem. It has a formula which must be followed exactly. Here is the formula and then a sample “I am” poem:

The formula:

I AM Poem  
  
FIRST STANZA  
I am (two special characteristics you have)  
I wonder (something you are actually curious about)  
I hear (an imaginary sound)  
I see (an imaginary sight)  
I want (an actual desire)  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)  
  
SECOND STANZA  
  
I pretend (something you actually pretend to do)  
I feel (a feeling about something imaginary)  
I touch (an imaginary touch)  
I worry (something that really bothers you)  
I cry (something that makes you very sad)  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)  
  
THIRD STANZA  
I understand (something you know is true)  
I say (something you believe in)  
I dream (something you actually dream about)  
I try (something you really make an effort about)  
I hope (something you actually hope for)  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

Sample ‘I AM’ poem:

I AM SANDY MAAS  
I am a nutty guy who likes dolphins.  
I wonder what I, and the world, will be like in the year 2100.  
I hear silence pulsing in the middle of the night.  
I see a dolphin flying up to the sky.  
I want the adventure of life before it passes me by.  
I am a nutty guy who likes dolphins.  
  
I pretend that I'm the ruler of the world.  
I feel the weight of the world on my shoulders.  
I touch the sky, the stars, the moon, and all the planets as  
representatives of mankind.  
I worry about the devastation of a nuclear holocaust.  
I cry for all the death and poverty in the world  
I am a nutty guy who likes dolphins.  
  
I understand the frustration of not being able to do something easily.  
I say that we are all equal.  
I dream of traveling to other points on the earth.  
I try to reach out to poor and starving children.  
I hope that mankind will be at peace and not die out.  
I am a nutty guy who likes dolphins.  
  
--SANDY MAAS

Your turn:

You will write **TWO** ‘I am’ poems, one for yourself and one for another person. The other person can be someone you have studied in Social Studies (or another course), someone you admire, or a fictional character you have read about. Be sure to follow the formula for both ‘I am’ poems.

Note: it will be harder to write about another person. What do you think Mother Theresa dreamed about? What would Terry Fox say he touched (an imaginary touch)? This will require you to be very creative and put yourself in someone else’s shoes!

Please follow this pattern for the title of these poems: I AM + name of person. For example: I AM Mrs. Cousar, or I AM Roberto Luongo. Be sure to include the author’s name (that’s you!) on your poems.

Hand them in. Please follow all instructions exactly!

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Poetry

Limericks

Limericks are another form of poetry which has a strict pattern to follow. Limericks are usually funny or amusing in tone, and they are five lines long. Their rhyme scheme is AABBA (the first, second, and fifth lines all rhyme, and the third and fourth lines rhyme with each other but not the others). There is also a pattern of line length and emphasis. The three A lines all have three strong beats (da DA da da DA da da DA) and the two B lines have two strong beats (da da DA da da DA). You can hear the rhythms if you read a limerick aloud. Here are some limericks for you to read aloud to hear the pattern:

Limerick 1

The incredible Wizard of Oz

Retired from his business because

Due to up-to-date science,

To most of his clients,

He wasn't the Wizard he was.

Limerick 2

There once was a fellow named Gil

Who freaked at the sight of a drill.

He brushed every day

So his dentist would say,

“Your teeth are so perfect; no bill.”

Limerick 3 (by Edward Lear)

There was a young lady of Niger

Who smiled as she rode on a tiger;

They returned from the ride

With the lady inside,

And the smile on the face of the tiger.

Your turn: Write a funny limerick. Remember to follow the **rhyme scheme** and **rhythm pattern** for a limerick. The rhythm pattern is very hard for most students. Practice saying your poem out loud and be sure it matches the pattern! Hand it in!

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Poetry

Cinquains, Haiku and Diamanté Poems

Three other short forms of poetry are the cinquain, the haiku and the diamanté poem.

The cinquain is a five-line poem (French students: notice the word ‘cinq’ hiding in there?) which does not rhyme. It follows this pattern:

Two syllables Example: Baseball

Four syllables Bat cracks against

Six syllables The pitch, sending it out

Eight syllables Over the back fence. I did it!

Two syllables Homerun!

A haiku is much shorter. It is only three lines long and does not rhyme. As in the cinquain, we must count syllables. The first line of a haiku has five syllables, the middle line has seven, and the last line has five again. Haiku are traditionally written about nature.

5 The bee flies quickly. On Sunday morning

7 It turns around and stings me; All the waves were there, in white.

5 Falls to the ground, dead. Kneeling on the beach.

A diamanté poem takes the shape of a diamond and is used to contrast two different ideas. Again, these poems don’t rhyme and follow some strict rules. Noun 1 and Noun 2 are usually opposites.

Noun1

Two adjectives describing noun 1

Three verbs ending with –ing about noun 1

A short sentence or phrase that connects the two ideas

Three verbs ending with –ing about noun 2

Two adjectives describing noun 2

Noun 2

Example:

Day

Bright, Sunny

Laughing, playing, running

Up in the east, down in the west

Talking, resting, sleeping

Quiet, dark

Night

Your task: write one **each** of haiku, cinquain and diamanté poems. Follow the rules given, and write about whatever topics you wish (the haiku should be about nature, though!).

Hand them in, with your name and period on them.